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All perfect praise be to Allaah, The Lord of the Worlds. I testify that there is none worthy of worship except Allaah, and that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger, may Allaah exalt his mention as well as that of his family and all his companions.

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The Companions

This is any individual who met the Messenger of Allaah ('Alahyi sallatu wa salam) or saw him, believed in him and his message and then died upon that belief. (Al-Hafiz ibnul Hajar (d.852H) Rahimahullaah said: "The most correct of what I have come across is that a Sahabee (Companion) is one who met the Prophet of Allaah (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa salam) whilst believing in him and died as a Muslim. So that includes the one who remained with him for a long or short time, those who narrated from him and those who did not, those who saw him but did not sit with him and those who could not see him due to blindness." Al – Ishabah of Al-Hafiz ibnul Hajar (d.852H) Rahimahullaah vol.1 pg.4-5)

So a man who embraced Islam during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allaah ('Alahyi sallatu wa salam) and met him but later apostates from the religion and then repents and accepts Islam again and dies upon the religion of Islam is a Companion e.g. Al –Ashath ibn Qays (Radiyallaahu anhu). However, a person who embraced Islam during the lifetime of the Prophet of Allaah (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa salam) but did not meet him, such an individual is not considered a Companion e.g. An-Najashi, the king of Ethiopia at the time of the Prophet of Allaah (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa salam). Likewise, a person whom embraces Islam and met the Messenger of Allaah ('Alahyi sallatu wa salam), but later apostated and then died upon that is also not a Companion e.g. ‘Abdullaah ibn Khalaf, Rabi’ah ibn Umayyah who apostated during the reign of 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab (Radiyallaahu anhu) and died upon his disbelief.

The numbers of Companions are to many to give an accurate figure of all of them. Although, it has been estimated that there were around 114,000 Companions.

THE STATUS OF A COMPANION

All the Companions of the Messenger of Allaah ('Alahyi sallatu wa salam) were thiqah (trustworthy) and ’adal (just). The narration reported by anyone of them is accepted without question, even if he is unknown. Thus, an unknown Companion is not taken as a defect when establishing the authenticity of a hadeeth. The reasons for this principle are cited below;

Allaah (Azza wa jaal) and His Messenger ('Alahyi sallatu wa salam) are pleased with all the Companions (Radiyallaahu anhum).

Evidence from the Qur’aan and Sunnah

"And the foremost to embrace Islam of the Muhajiroon (Immigrants from Makkah) and the Ansar (Citizens of Madina) and also those who follow them exactly. Allaah is Well-pleased with them as they are with Him…"(Suratut-Tawbah (9): 100)

Narrated Aboo Hurayrah (Radiyallaahu anhu): The Messenger of Allaah ('Alahyi sallatu wa salam) said: "The best people/generation is my generation and then those who come after them, then those who come after them." (Saheeh al-Bukhari)

The Prophet of Allaah (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa salam) accepted the narration of an unknown Companion, once he knew that he was a Muslim and he did not ask about his condition.

Evidence from the Sunnah

Narrated 'Abdulllaah ibn 'Abbaas (Radiyallaahu anhu): A Bedouin came to the Prophet of Allaah (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa salam) and said: "I have seen the new moon of Ramadan." He asked: "Do you testify that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah?" He replied: "Yes." He then asked: "Do you testify that Muhammad is Allaah’s Messenger?" He replied: "Yes, I do." The Messenger of Allaah ('Alahyi sallatu wa salam) then said: "Bilaal, announce to the people that they should fast tomorrow." (Ibn Khuzaymah. Ibn Hibbaan (d.354H) Rahimahullaah declared it to be authentic.)

The following points can be obtained from the above hadeeth;

1. A person who meets the Prophet of Allaah (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa salam) and believes in Islam is a Companion.
2. Once the Messenger of Allaah ('Alahyi sallatu wa salam) knew of the person’s acceptance of Islam, he neglected to inquire about his condition (not even his name).
3. The narration of a single trustworthy and just person is acceptable.

THE LAST COMPANIONS TO DIE AND THEIR DEATH PLACE

• The last Companion to die in Makkah was ’Amr bin Wathila al-Layhee (Radiyallaahu anhu) who died in the year 110H. no other Companion lived longer than he did.

• The last Companion to die in Madina was Muhammad ibn ar-Rabi’ah al-Ansaree al-Khazrajee (Radiyallaahu anhu) who died in the year 99H.
• The last Companion to die in Damascus, which is in Sham, was Wa’ila bin Askar al-Laythee (Radiyallaahu anhu) who died in the year 86H.
• The last Companion to die in Hims which is also in Sham was ’Abdullaah bin Bisr al-Mazinee (Radiyallaahu anhu) who died in the year 96H.
• The last Companion to die in Basra was Anas bin Maalik al-Ansaree al-Khazrajee (Radiyallaahu anhu) who died in the year 93H.
• The last Companion to die in Kufah was ’Abdullaah ibn Abee Awfee al-Aslamee (Radiyallaahu anhu) who died in the year 87H.
• The last Companion to die in Misr was ’Abdullaah ibn al-Harith ibn Jaza az-Zubaydee (Radiyallaahu anhu) who died in the year 89H.

None of the Companions died after the year 110H that is in accordance with the statement of the Messenger of Allaah ('Alahyi sallatu wa salam)

Evidence from the Sunnah

Narrated 'Abdullaah ibn 'Umar (Radiyallaahu anhu): "The Messenger of Allaah ('Alahyi sallatu wa salam) prayed with us in the last days of his life, then after he gave the Salaams, he stood up and said: ‘In this night, after 100 years, there will be no-one from those who are living today on the face of the earth.’" (Saheeh al-Bukhari)

This hadeeth was also reported by Jabir ibn 'Abdullaah (Radiyallaahu anhu) in Saheeh Muslim who stated that this statement of the Prophet of Allaah (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa salam) was made 1 month before his death.

Benefits of knowing the last Companions to die

1. Whoever claims to be a Companion but died after the year 110Hadeeth, his claim is rejected outright.
2. Whoever from amongst the Successors did not reach the level of understanding before the year 110AH.

THE COMPANIONS WHO NARRATED THE MOST AHADEETH

There were only a few Companions who narrated more than 1000 ahadeeth:

• Aboo Hurayrah (Radiyallaahu anhu) who narrated 5,374 ahadeeth.
• 'Abdullaah ibn 'Umar (Radiyallaahu anhu) who narrated 2,630 ahadeeth.

• Anas bin Maalik (Radiyallaahu anhu) who narrated 2,286 ahadeeth.
• A'eesha bint Aboo Bakr (Radiyallaahu anha) who narrated 2,210 ahadeeth.
• 'Abdulllaah ibn 'Abbaas (Radiyallaahu anhu) who narrated 1,660 ahadeeth.
• Jabir ibn 'Abdullaah (Radiyallaahu anhu) who narrated 1,540 ahadeeth.
• Aboo Sa'eed al-Khudree (Radiyallaahu anhu) who narrated 1,170 ahadeeth.
The fact that these 7 Companions narrated the most ahadeeth does not mean that they also heard the most ahadeeth from the Messenger of Allaah ('Alahyi sallatu wa salam). This is because the few number of ahadeeth reported by a Companion could be due to a number of reasons:

• An early death e.g. Hamza (Radiyallaahu anhu), the uncle of the Prophet of Allaah (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa salam) who died in the battle of Badr.
• An important job that demanded so much of the Companion’s time e.g. Uthman ibn Affan (Radiyalllaahu anhu) who was a Caliph.
• An early death as well as having an important job e.g. Aboo Bakr (Radiyallaahu anhu) who had an early death and was also a Caliph.
• Other reasons.

AL – MUKHADARAM

This is an individual who believed in the Messenger of Allaah ('Alahyi sallatu wa salam), during his own lifetime, died upon this belief but never met the Prophet of Allaah (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa salam). These individual are between the level of a Sahaba and a Tabi’een, although, some Scholars say that they are from the kibaar tabi’een (elder successor). The Scholars have listed up to 40 names of such individuals who fall under this title:

• Al-Ahnaf bin Qays
• Al-Aswad bin Yazeed
• Sa’d bin Iyaas
• Abdullaah bin ’Ukaym
• Amru ibn Maymoon
• Aboo Muslim al-Khawalahi
• An-Najashi (the King of Ethiopia)

The status of a hadeeth narrated by a mukhadaram is the same as a mursal hadeeth (loose narration) of a Successor. This is because there is a cut in the isnad (chain of narrators) between the mukhadaram and the Prophet

of Allaah (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa salam) who is unknown.

AT–TABI’EEN (THE SUCCESSORS)

This is any individual who met a Companion of the Messenger of Allaah ('Alahyi sallatu wa salam), believed in Islam and died upon it. The exact number of Successors is too numerous to give an accurate number of them.

THE LEVELS OF THE SUCCESSORS

There are 3 levels of the Successors;

1. At-Tabaqal Kubra (The Elder Level): - these were the Successors of whom most of their narrations were from the Companions e.g.

• Alqamah ibn Qays (d.61/62H)
• Urwah ibn Zubayr ibn al-’Awwaam (d.94H)
• Sa’eed ibn Musayyib (d.94H)
• Ibraaheem ibn Yazeed an-Nakh’ee (d.96H)

2. At-Tabaqal Sughra (The Younger Level): - these were the Successors of whom most of their narrations were from other Successors and they only met a few Companions e.g.

• Abee az-Zinad
• Yahya ibn Sa’eed al-Qattan (d.198H)

3. At-Tabaqal Wusta (The Middle Level): - these were the Successors of whom some of their narrations were from the Companions and the rest of them were from other Successors e.g.

• Umar ibn ’Abdul-’Azeez (d.101H)
• Mujaahid ibn Jubayr al-Makkee (d.103/104H)
• Salim bin ’Abdullaah bin Umar (d.106H)
• Muhammad ibn Seereen (d.110H)
• Aboo ’Abdullaah Ikramah
• Al-Hasan ibn Aboo’l Hasan al-Basree (d.110H)
• Ata bin Abee Rabah (d.114H)
• Aboo’l-Khattaab Qatadah bin Du’amah (d.118H)
• Muhammad bin Muslim bin ash-Shihaab Az-Zuhree (d.124H)
• Shu’bah ibn al-Hajjaj (d.160H)

Taken ‘Mustalah al Hadeeth’ by Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saleh al-‘Uthaymeen.